

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
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R 011420Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2262
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMCONSUL CASABLANCA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR ELAB EG JO AG XF
SUBJECT: LOCAL RAMIFICATIONS OF ALO INTRIGUE

REF: (A) AMMAN 1092 (B) (B) STATE 36082 (C) GENEVA 967

1. LRO HAS DISCUSSED ELECTIONS FOR ALO DIRGENSHIP, WHICH WILL BE HELD DURING MARCH 6-16 ALO CONFERENCE IN ALEXANDRIA, WITH EGYPTIAN LABOR SOURCE. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, EGYPTIANS STILL HOPE THAT MINLABOR BULTIYYA CAN WIN. COMPLEX STRATEGY INVOLVES POSSIBLE NOMINATIONS OF JRODANIAN ABD AL-AZIZ OR MOROCCAN MINLABOR KHATTABI AS FOILS TO ALGERIAN HODEIRI'S PRESENT STRENGTH. EGYPTIANS HAD HOPED ENTICE KHATTABI TO MAKE RUN FOR POST, BOTH BECAUSE HE IS A MODERATE AND BECAUSE HE REPUTED TO BE WIDELY POPULAR WITH ARAB LABOR. KHATTABI, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, NOT INTERESTED BECAUSE HE BELIEVES CONFERENCE WILL INEVITABLY TURN INTO MOROCCAN/ALGERIAN SLUGFEST OVER SAHARA ISSUE. EGYPTIANS,
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AS WE HAVE NOTED BEFORE, HAVE GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT NOT TO PUT UP BULTIYYA'S NAME OFFICIALLY, AND DO NOT BELIEVE THA JORDANIAN SRONG ENOUGH TO WIN. ONE FACOR NOW SAID TO BE HODEIRI'S SUCCESSFUL EFFORT WOO SAUDI SUPPORT FOLLOWING RECENT VISIT TO JIDDA, DURING WHICH HE PROBABLY DREW ON QUESTION OF CLOSING BOOK ON HOSTILE ISRAELI RESOLUTION AT ILO. EGYPTIANS HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT ENOUGH SUPPORT FOR JORDANIAN CAN BE MARSHALLED TO FORCE

STANDOFF BETWEEN HIM AND HODEIRI, WITH CONFERENCE THEN TURNING TO BULTIYYA AS COMPROMISE CANDIDATE.

2. AS FAR AS BULTIYYA'S FUTURE IS CONCERNED, THERE ARE WIDE-SPREAD INDICATIONS THAT HE WILL SHORTLY BE LEAVING POSITION AS MINLABOR, EITHER FOR ALO OR SIMPLY TO CARRY ON WITH ICATU. HE WOULD PREFER ALO BECAUSE OF ITS PERQUISITES AND SIMPLE FACT THAT DG SALARAY OF L.E. 600 PER MONTH, HALF OF WHICH IS PAYABLE IN HARD CURRENCY, IS ABOUT DOUBLE THAT HE WOULD EARN AS ICATU HEAD OR MINLABOR.

3. EGYPTIAN LABOR, WHICH HAS CLOSED IN ON ITSELF AND MORE THAN EVER FOCUSED ITS ATTENTION ON INTERNECINE POWER PLAYS, IS NOW WRANGLING OVER WHO SHOULD REPLACE BULTIYYA AS MINISTER. EFL PRESIDENT SAAD AHMAD IS KNOWN TO BE HIGHLY COVETOUS OF PRESTIGIOUS CABINET POST, BUT DETERMINED TO STAY ON A SAME TIME AS HEAD OF EFTU. (AT LEAST SOME UNION OFFICIALS HERE RECOGNIZE THAT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD UNDERMINE CREDIBILITY OF EFTU AS INDEPENDENT LABOR MOVEMENT BUT NOTE THAT THIS OLD AND HARD TO BREAK PATTERN.) AT SAME TIME, TRANSPORT WORKERS PRESIDENT OKEILY, WHO HAS BEEN IN LIMELIGHT SINCE LAST SEPTEMBER'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT STRIKE AND WHO HAD MAJOR PUBLIC ROLE IN GOE-LABOR CONCILIATION IN RECENT DISTURBANCES, ALSO ASPIRES TO BE NEXT LABOR MINISTER AND IS COUNTING HEAVILY ON HIS LONG TIME RELATIONSHIP WITH SADAT. NEVERTHELESS, SOME OF OUR SOURCES BELIEVE SADAT WOULD NOT GO SO FAR AS TO PUT OKEILY, ALBEIT AN EFFECTIVE LABOR LEADER, INTO POSITION WHICH REQUIRES MORE BUREAUCRATIC SOPHISTICATION THAN OKEILY POSSESSES.

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4. MEANWHILE, WAITING HOPEFULLY IN THE WINGS IS DIEHARD FORMER LABOR MINISTER/EFTU PRESIDENT SALAH GHARIB, WHO SPECULATING THAT SAAD AHMAD WILL NOT SUCCEED, THAT BULTIYYA WILL MOVE OFF TO ALO OR ICATU AND THAT HE MAY EMERGE AS ONLY AVAILABLE CANDIDATE FOR MINISTRY. GHARIB'S AMBITIONS HAVE, IN FACT, LED HIM TO CANCEL HIS ATTENDANCE AT ILO GOVERNING BODY MEETING WHERE DG'S PROPOSAL TO CLOSE BOOK ON ISRAELI RESOLUTION WILL BE VOTED UPON. SOURCE CITED ABOVE TELLS US THA, ALTHOUGH GHARIB MIGHT HAVE HAD CHANCE TO CAST POPULAR NEGATIVE VOTE ON ISSUE, HE WAS ALSO DISSUADED FROM ATTENDING BY ARGUMENT THAT ISRAELIS COULD MOUNT, IN RETALIATION, POSSIBLY EFFECTIVE ATTACK ON SUPINE EFTU REACTION TO SADAT'S SPECIFIC PUBLIC PROHIBITION OF SRIKES IN FEB. 3 SECURITY DECREE.

5. LRO WILL SEEK DEVELOP FURTHER INFO ON ARAB PLANS FOR JUNE ILO CONFERENCE.
EILTS

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